

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SIFO OPINION POLL SHOWS THREE NON-SOCIALIST PARTIES
STILL COMMAND MAJORITY IN LATE AUGUST

SUMMARY: SIFO OPINION POLL REPORTS THAT AS OF LATE
AUGUST THE THREE "BOURGEOIS" PARTIES WHICH HOPE TO TURN
PALME GOVERNMENT OUT IN SEPT. 16 ELECTIONS STILL COMMAND
MORE THAN 50 P/C OF VOTER SUPPORT. SIFO RESULTS SHOW
VIRTUALLY NO CHANGE IN STANDING OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES
WITH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS STILL AT 41 P/C LEVEL. RESULTS ARE
DISAPPOINTING TO SOCDEMS BUT INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS STILL
REGARD ELECTION AS VERY CLOSE WITH NO CLEAR FAVORITE
IDENTIFIABLE. END SUMMARY.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED.

1. SIFO OPINION RESEARCH AGENCY PUBLISHED SEPT. 1 RESULTS
OF LATEST SAMPLING OF ELECTORATE DURING PERIOD AUG. 16-30.
SIFO ASKED SCIENTIFIC SAMPLING OF 1208 VOTERS "WHICH PARTY
DO YOU FAVOR TODAY?" RESULTS (FIGURES IN PARENTHESES

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ARE RESULTS OF LAST POLL TAKEN IN JUNE 1973) IN PERCENTAGES
WERE:

MODERATE COALITION PARTY 14.5 (15)
LIBERAL PARTY 11 (10)
CENTER PARTY 25 (26)
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY 41 (41)
LEFT COMMUNIST PARTY (VPK) 5.5 (5)
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC RALLY 2 (2.5)
SWEDISH COMMUNIST PARTY (SKP) 1 (0.5)

2. COMBINED PERCENTAGE FOR THREE NON-SOCIALIST PARTIES WHICH ARE PLEDGED TO FORM GOVERNMENT COALITION IF POSSIBLE WAS 50.5 P/C COMPARED TO 51 P/C IN JUNE. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PERCENTAGE PLUS VPK (WHICH BACKS PALME GOVERNMENT IN KEY RIKSDAG VOTES) IS 46.5 P/C AS AGAINST 46 P/C IN JUNE. THUS, IF SEPT. 16 ELECTIONS COME OUT AS SIFO MEASURED VOTER OPINION ROUGHLY FOUR WEEKS BEFORE ELECTION DAY, THREE "BOURGEOIS" PARTIES WOULD COMMAND MAJORITY OF 180-185 MANDATES IN 350-SEAT RIKSDAG.

3. FOR PURPOSES OF COMPARISON, FOLLOWING ARE RESULTS OF SIFO POLL TAKEN IN AUGUST 1970 WITH ACTUAL OUTCOME OF SEPTEMBER 1970 ELECTION (IN TERMS OF PERCENTAGES) GIVEN IN PARENTHESES:

MODERATE 10.5 (11.5)
LIBERAL 17.5 (16.2)
CENTER 19 (19.9)
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC 48.5 (45.3)
VPK 2 (4.8)
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC 1.5 (1.8)
KFML (PREDECESSOR OF SKP) 0.5 (0.5)

4. SEPT. 1 RELEASE WILL BE LAST SET OF SIFO FIGURES UNTIL TWO DAYS BEFORE ELECTION WHEN SIFO WILL MAKE FINAL FORECAST. SOCDEM PARTY SECRETARY STEN ANDERSSON DISPUTED SIFO FINDINGS IN STATEMENT ISSUED SEPT. 2. ANDERSSON SAID HIS PARTY HAD BEEN POLLING PRIVATELY AND RESULTS SHOWED SATISFACTORY RISE IN SOCDEM POPULARITY IN RECENT WEEKS.

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COMMENT: VIRTUALLY UNCHANGED PICTURE OF VOTER PREFERENCES, AS COMPARED TO SIFO'S JUNE POLL, COMES AS SERIOUS DISAPPOINTMENT TO SOCDEM PARTY. LEADERS HAD HOPED TREND TOWARD SOCDEM PARTY WOULD BE DISCERNABLE, LENDING IMPETUS TO PARTY STEAMROLLER THAT IS SUPPOSED TO BE MOVING NOW. ON OTHER HAND, SIFO FIGURES WHICH SUGGEST OPPOSITION REALLY HAS A CHANCE TO BURN OUT PALME GOVERNMENT ARE LIKELY TO STIMULATE TURNOUT OF LIBERAL, MODERATE, AND CENTER VOTERS ON ELECTION DAY.

AS FOR RELIABILITY OF SIFO FIGURES AS MEANS OF FORE-
CASING ELECTIONS OUTCOME, CAUTION IS RECOMMENDED. SIFO
ADMITS THAT MARGIN OF ERROR IN ITS SAMPLING TECHNIQUE IS
SUCH THAT A TREND OF VOTER OPINION MAY EXIST AND NOT BE
REFLECTED IN AUGUST RESULTS. EXAMINATION OF 1970 FIGURES
GIVEN IN PARAGRAPH 3 SHOWS THIS IS QUITE POSSIBLE, OR THAT
SIGNIFICANT SHIFTS IN FORTUNES OF INDIVIDUAL PARTIES MAY
OCCUR IN LAST FOUR WEEKS OF CAMPAIGN.

LOCAL SOCDEM SATRAPS HAVE BEEN REPORTING OPTIMISTICALLY
TO THEIR NATIONAL LEADERS DURING RECENT WEEKS, ACCORDING
TO EMBASSY INFORMANTS. HOWEVER, WE HAVE REASON TO DOUBT
THAT PRIVATE SOCDEM POLLS (AT LEAST AS OF TWO WEEKS AGO)
LOOK AS GOOD AS PARTY SECRETARY ANDERSSON CLAIMS.

CONSENSUS OF INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS HERE REMAINS THAT
THIS WILL BE A CLOSE ELECTION. AS OF 12 DAYS BEFORE THE
VOTING, THERE IS NO CLEAR FAVORITE AS BETWEEN SOCDEM
PARTY AND THREE-PARTY BOURGEOIS OPPOSITION.
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